



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Georgia Elections

As delivered by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
April 1, 2004

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States welcomes the preliminary conclusions of the OSCE Observer Mission, which noted the progress that Georgia has made in bringing its elections, and let me quote here from the Mission's March 29 statement, "in closer alignment with European standards for democratic elections, including OSCE commitments and Council of Europe standards."

It also noted that the electoral process "will only be fully tested in a more competitive environment, once a genuine level of political pluralism is reestablished."

We share the Observer Mission's concerns about significant irregularities in certain locales, including Kvemo Kartli, Dusheti and Ajara.

We will continue to closely follow the vote counting process, including the formula for calculating the 7 percent threshold for proportional representation in the Parliament.

We await the OSCE's final report and look forward to further consolidation and strengthening of democracy in Georgia, but we'd like to take this opportunity to commend the Georgian government and the Georgian people for the steady progress that appears to have been made in improving elections.

Thank you.